

Issues in Nigeria-Senegal Relations: 2013-2018

**Oluwatosin Adeyemo¹ and
Aderemi Opeyemi Ade-Ibijola²**

Abstract

Relations between Nigeria and Senegal dates back to the 1960s when the two West African countries established formal diplomatic relations. Strategic cooperation between the two countries has been facilitated through the NigeriaSenegal Binational Commission, even though this has not produced desired results. The Nigeria-Senegal Binational Commission was conceived to manage relations between both countries. In this context, this paper examines the economic and political objectives underpinning relations between Nigeria and Senegal within the period 2013-2018. The paper identifies lack of proper coordination and implementation of the Binational Commission framework as the major factor inhibiting relations between Abuja and Dakar. The study adopted a qualitative research method which is descriptive and explanatory.

Introduction

Nigeria-Senegal relations started in the 1960s when the two West African countries established formal diplomatic relations. Since then, relations between Abuja and Dakar have grown rapidly (Utomi, 2012). In terms of

-
1. Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, College of Social and Management Sciences, Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria.
 2. Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, College of Social and Management Sciences, Afe Babalola University Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria; adeibjope@gmail.com

trade, Nigeria exports mostly crude oil to Senegal and imports consumer goods such as clothes, textile materials among other goods. About 5,000 documented Nigerians live in Senegal with many working in a host of international organisations in the country, while a good number of Nigerian nationals are into commercial activities both in the formal and informal sectors of the Senegalese economy. Nigeria and Senegal have anchored their relations on strategic gains especially in sectors of the economy such as trade, industry, tourism, security, defence, energy, agriculture and education. However, due to the inability of the two countries joint commission to meet since 1999, political and economic relations between both countries have not developed to a mutually beneficial level. This has been worsened by the absence of a “roadmap and strategy” to strengthen their cooperation.

Against this background, this paper examines Nigeria-Senegal relations in political, economic and cultural contexts. Specifically, it looks at the level of political, economic and cultural relations between Nigeria and Senegal within the period 2013 and 2018. To this end, this paper is divided into the following sessions: introduction, Nigeria-Senegal Political and Economic Relations, data analysis and discussion; recommendation/ conclusion.

Nigeria-Senegal Political and Economic Relations

Nigeria and Senegal have interacted more on political and economic levels since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. According to Katyen Jackden, former Nigeria’s Ambassador to Senegal, Nigeria-Senegal relations is built on strategic political and economic interests Adeyemo (2018). The bilateral relationship is very good, both at political and economic levels. Trade between both countries has existed more in the informal sector consequently making it difficult to quantify the size of trade. Trade at the formal sector of the economy has been dominated by oil exports to Senegal which has now declined as a result of the discovery of oil in Senegal in 2010.

In terms of political relations, Senegal has long supported functional integration with Nigeria through various multilateral organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) the United Nations (UN), etc. Senegal has a high profile in many international organisations and was a member of the

UN Security Council from 1988 to 89. Senegal was elected to the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1997. Both countries have pursued efforts to consolidate trade and investment ties, and boost intra-Africa trade. According to Adeyemo (2018), both countries has expressed the need for strong inter-connectivity in order to reach new markets and expand the present bilateral trade between both countries for mutual economic gains (Aliounne, 2013).

Senegal is the 119th largest export economy in the world. In 2017, the value of its export and import was \$3.11b and \$6.65b respectively: resulting in a trade deficit balance of \$3.53B. In the same year, the GDP of Senegal was \$14.7B while GDP per capita was \$1,489. Nigeria on the other hand is the 58th largest export economy in the world. For instance, in 2007 export and import were valued at \$6.19b and \$12.024b respectively resulting in trade deficit balance of \$ 5.83b. In that year also, the GDP of Nigeria was \$375.77b and its GDP per capita was put at \$1,968.56 (World Bank Data, 2018).

All of these figures show that the two countries have a lot to do in terms of their trade balances, especially by improving their export values through effort aimed at improving their domestic production of imported goods (World Bank Data, 2018).

Table 2.1: Senegal Trade Statistics

TOP EXPORTS	VALUE (\$M)	TOP IMPORTS	VALUE (\$M)
Gold	440	Refined Petroleum	577
Refined Petroleum	374	Crude Petroleum	418
Non-fillet Frozen Fish	270	Rice	317
Phosphoric Acid	222	Packaged Medicaments	233
Cement	220	Cars	168

TOP EXPORT DESTINATIONS		TOP IMPORT ORIGIN	
COUNTRY	VALUE (\$M)	COUNTRY	VALUE (\$M)
Mali	631	France	867
India	286	China	864
Switzerland	285	India	463
United Arab Emirates	171	Nigeria	428
China	137	Netherland	343

Source: (World Bank Data, 2018).

Regional trade policy is developed along the lines of boosting Nigeria and Senegal's exports, not only between to both countries but to the rest of the world. Imports into the region are therefore seen as complementary to the exports of goods and services. In terms of destinations, Europe alone accounts for about 28% of ECOWAS exports with 23% for the European Union countries alone. The Americas account for 40% out of which 34 % enter for the Free Trade Association of North America (NAFTA) that have members like the United States, Canada and Mexico.

As for regional imports, they are dominated by about ten products. Fuels holds a leading position in this list; these take up 24 %. Next is motor vehicles, tractors, cycles and other vehicles (2nd place), machinery, mechanical appliances and boilers (3rd), machinery and electrical appliances (4th), cereals (5th), plastics (6th), works in iron, iron and steel (7th), iron, cast iron, steel (8th), pharmaceuticals (9th) and fish and seafood (10 th). As for the exports, Nigeria appears here also in a dominant position by making alone 41% of transactions compared to 18% in Ghana, 10% each for Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire. Nigeria and Ghana together account for 59% of the Community imports against 36% for the eight countries of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). The other five countries of the ECOWAS Member States realise only 5 % of the Community's imports (World Bank Data, 2018).

However, to some extent, trade in services which ought to promote growth in West Africa is hampered by institutional, regulatory and infrastructural constraints. In addition to the lack of visibility and data for the potential of the service sector at the regional level, various other internal and external constraints are undermining its competitiveness. Among the

internal constraints are fiscal pressure, development of the informal sector, difficulty of access to credit and inadequacy of the financing mechanisms for the export of services, poor quality of performance (poor compliance with ISO Quality Assurance Standards 9001 2000 Version), energy deficit, lack of transparency and good governance, execution of a substantial part of public contracts by foreign companies in many countries, inadequacy of service infrastructure, high cost of trade transactions (factors of production, administrative bottlenecks), etc. Efforts are currently on to ensure that there is no longer a lack of information on foreign markets, obstacles to free movement, mutual recognition of qualifications and diplomas, relatively high costs of the establishment of businesses abroad and the situation of land-locked countries, among others.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The purpose of this paper is to analyse Senegal and Nigerian relations. The study is framed by the concern that little has been done in terms of research on Nigeria-Senegal relations.

Assessing the Relationship between Economic and Political Relations in Nigeria-Senegal

According to Senegalese Foreign Minister, Sidiki Kaba, bilateral relations between Nigeria and Senegal have been strengthened in key sectors of the economy such as trade and industry, tourism, security, defence, energy, agriculture and education (Adeyemo, 2018). Both countries have held strategic meetings at ministerial level to enhance cooperation. However, the inability of both countries to hold a meeting under the auspices of Nigeria-Senegal Binational Commission has impeded the pace of cooperation. In 2018, Nigeria and Senegal held strategic meetings at ministerial level to enhance cooperation. However, the inability of both countries to hold a meeting under the auspices of Nigeria-Senegal Binational Commission since 1999 has impeded the pace of cooperation. Despite the Binational Commission's setbacks, Nigeria and Senegal have articulated areas of mutual cooperation which seek to build on existing relations between them. These areas include very strategic and important sectors of cooperation such as oil sector, security, tourism, banking, agriculture, industry, trade and investment, justice and education. In addition, both countries have sought to

involve the private sectors of both countries to enhance the process of cooperation.

Other areas also exist in commerce which Nigeria and Senegal are exploring. These include small and medium enterprises, cooperation in the fields of petroleum, fishery, agriculture and industry, among others. Diplomatically and politically, the two countries have cooperated on subregional level within the framework of ECOWAS.

The Economic Value of Nigeria-Senegal Relations

Regarding investment, Senegalese Investment Council shows a strong input of Nigeria being the third largest investor in Senegal after the France and US. Nigeria has nothing less than \$1 Billion worth of investments in Senegal. These investments cut across sectors such as banking, insurance, manufacturing, informal trade and small-scale productions (Adeyemo, 2018).

The Contributions of the Nigerian Community Living in Senegal to the Senegalese Economy

The Nigeria community in Senegal has contributed immensely to the country's economy across different sectors of the Senegalese economy. In the area of education, Nigerians residing in Senegal have contributed to the Education Fund which was initiated by Aliou Sall, a Senegalese politician. Nigerians residing in the Dakar region contributed immensely to the Fund both in cash and in kind. In kind, they took part in the construction of bore holes in rural parts of the region. Culturally, Nigerians in Senegal participate in the traditional activities such as "*Thieboudienne*", pronounced Chebu Jen also called fish and rice festival Day, both in cash and kind. In addition, Nigerians ownership of manufacturing companies has helped in boosting the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) of Senegal.

Other areas through which Nigeria has contributed immensely to the Senegalese economy include: founding of recreational centres, establishment of schools, which are set up for the benefit of the host community. There is also the establishment of religious organisations directed at improving the welfare of the host city/community. Moreover, large commercial shops are owned by Nigerians which provide jobs for both Nigerians and Senegalese. Finally, Nigerian trained professionals like lawyers and medical doctors in

Dakar region provide legal services to the Senegalese Community. (Adeyemo, 2018).

Assessing the Economic and Political Relations between Nigeria and Senegal (2013 – 2018)

It should be noted that although the multilateral corporation between Senegal and Nigeria is relatively active in the political and diplomatic field, it has not yet translated in significant bilateral development both economically and commercially (Senegalese Embassy report, 2018). The lethargy could be explained by the fact that since 1963, the year of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the great mixed commission met only twice, in 1985 in Lagos and 1999 in Dakar.

The legal framework for corporation between Senegal and Nigeria is governed by five (5) Agreement and conventions: a convention in the field of sea fishing, signed in Dakar on 8th November, 1982 and ratified on 24th August, 1984; memorandum of understanding on the supply of petroleum, signed in Dakar on 28th August, 1975; Air transport agreement, signed in Dakar on 14th July, 1981, ratified on 1st May, 1985; Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement signed in Dakar on 31st March, 1981 ; and Cooperation Agreement in the field of culture signed in Dakar on 28th March, 1971 and ratified on 2nd February, 1973.

Although modest, these legal frameworks cover quite important and varied areas of cooperation. However, it should be more diversified to support emerging sectors such as security, tourism, infrastructure, trade, cybercrime, taxation and so on. Beyond the ECOWAS instruments on the free movement of persons and goods, an agreement on the entry, residence, establishment and protection of property and persons and their transfer should also be signed between the two parties.

Admittedly, the difficulties inherent in the intra-African trade (lack of infrastructure, non-tariff barriers etc.) may explain the modest trade in many areas, however, Senegal and Nigeria could have formed partnerships by focusing on the comparative advantages because the two countries have administrative traditions that are likely to complement each other.

Trade relations between Senegal and Nigeria are governed by the provisions of the Treaty Establishing the Economic Community of West African States. The regional legal instruments, as well as the acts relating

to the free movement of persons are good in the ECOWAS area and promote, between the 15 member states of the community, a trade regime based on: The liberalisation of intra-community trade by the total elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in products originating in the member states; The promotion of exchange between the member states; and Improving the business environment.

It should be noted that the effective implementation of these preferential provisions remains weak. This situation seems to stem from certain difficulties related to the prevalence of non-tariff barriers and the harmonisation of system established by WAEMU and ECOWAS. However, the on-going work to bring the two systems close together is expected to lead to the eventual realisation of single custom union for all West Africa.

In addition, Senegal and Nigeria have been members of the World Trade Organization since 1st January, 1995. As such, they reciprocally grant each other most favoured nation treatment in their trade. Regarding trade between the two countries, it should be noted that from 2002 to 2008, their value almost tripled, from 117,912 billion CFA franc to 353.474 billion CFA franc. This increase is mainly due to the exponential growth of our country's imports, except for the year 2006.

This explains the growing trade deficit which results in extremely low coverage rates over the entire reference period. Senegalese imports from Nigeria cover a much wider range of products, but are dominated by crude oil which accounts for 99% of the total revenue of imports over the entire reference period. However, it should be noted that these imports fell sharply in 2006. In fact, from 193 billion FCFA in 2005, they fell to only 62 billion FCFA. This drop in import was due to the reduction in imports of products like: tyres and rubbers (170 million in 2005 and 19 million in 2006), products of para-chemical industries (125 million in 2005 and 3 million in 2006), printed cotton fabrics (258 million in 2005 and 182 million in 2006), other products (99 million in 2005 and 45 million in 2006).

Senegalese exports which are relatively low compared to imports, increased by 1,000% between 2002 and 2008, from 708 million CFA franc to nearly 8 billion CFA franc. However, they fell by 65% between 2002 and 2003, from 708 million francs to 248 million francs and then between 2004 and 2005, from 2,399 billion CFA francs to 1,026 billion francs, a decrease

of 57% in value. Starting from 2006, there was recovery in export of products such as cigarettes and hides and skins. Senegal's current performance on the Nigerian market is weak, as evidence from the import coverage of export; hence the need to strengthen the trade between Dakar and Abuja. In Addition, partnership agreements can be sought in a number of areas.

In the area of export promotion, the actions envisaged should be included in the framework of the Accelerated Growth Strategy through the high potential clusters that have been selected: tourism, arts and crafts and cultural industries, cotton, textile and clothing, tele-services, agro industry and sea products. So far, the Nigeria-Senegal relation has not impacted well on Nigeria's economic and commercial image abroad. The state of Nigeria's bilateral trade agreement in the global market is bad. Nigerian foreign policies have good impacts on the political, cultural and strategic/ military relations since independence. This is because the relation is "relatively active in political and diplomatic field alone; it has not yet resulted in significant bilateral development, both economically and commercially" (Senegalese Embassy, 2018).

Factors Inhibiting Nigeria-Senegal Relations from 2013 to 2018

There have been two main phases of political development that Nigeria went through: the first one is the authoritarian rule of the military, while the second one is the democratic civilian rule. Both of them have different characteristics and indeed contradict each other. Both have also had implications for the formulation of foreign policies and, in this case, on the bilateral relations between Senegal and Nigeria. According to Adeyemo (2018), there is the inability of both countries to have bilateral meetings under the auspices of Nigeria-Senegal Binational Commission in the last 20years so as to build on existing relations between them. Furthermore, the inadequacy and obsolete nature of the legal framework for cooperation also inhibit the effectiveness of relations between both countries. These shortcomings can be traced to the absence of political will by past administrations in Abuja and Dakar.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the economic and political objectives underpinning Nigeria-Senegal relations within the period 2013 and 2018. The findings of this study show that though Nigeria-Senegal relations is based on strategic interests. The paper identifies the factors inhibiting relations between both countries to include: terrorism, political instability, economic dependency; attitudes and perception of the elites. Furthermore, the paper identifies lack of proper coordination and implementation of the bi-national commission framework as the major factor inhibiting relations between both countries. This study observes that the inability to hold joint commission meetings in the past was because of the absence of political will by past administrations in Abuja and Dakar.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. It is of importance that for Nigeria–Senegal relations to be more beneficial, the two counties must meet more often to discuss and review the existing bilateral agreements.
2. There is the need for the involvement of the private sector in the bilateral agreement. This will improve on business opportunities existing in both countries.
3. Nigeria and Senegal should form partnerships by focusing on the comparative advantages of each country and exchange experience based on strengths of each state.
4. There should be liberalisation of trade tariff and non-tariff barriers to improve trade in product originating from both states in order to promote exchange.
5. There should be a major reorganisation of the Foreign Service such that positions of the ambassadors and other key positions will no longer be politicised. Only career diplomats and practitioners who understand the nuances of international relations and global politics should be appointed into those sensitive positions and offices.

6. The present administration of both countries should holistically address the economic factors/challenges confronting the nation, most especially those factors militating against Nigeria-Senegal relation as discovered in this study. The economy needs to be attuned to the realities of globalisations. As such, the economic diplomacy of the present administration need to be directed towards addressing contemporary challenges in the society.
7. The place of Nigerians in the Diaspora towards nation-building in the new world order should be recognised and encouraged. This is because they have a prominent role in advancing the foreign policy of the country. As such; they ought to be given adequate diplomatic attention.
8. The Federal Government of Nigeria must ensure that recruitment into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should henceforth be based on merit alone, and special trainings in international relations at the Masters level and in other related areas should be encouraged as this will further equip and arm the officers with all they need to properly discharge their duties.
9. Effective public relations practitioners should be integrated into government, especially in the case of international relations, in order to effectively boost the image of the country abroad.
10. There is the need for a strong strategic plan and long-term projection of Nigeria's foreign policy posture with a view to fashioning out a roadmap for her diplomacy. Nigeria-Senegal relation in contemporary context must be premised solely on national interest.

References

- Alao A. 2011. *Nigeria and the Global Powers: Continuity and Change in Policy and Perceptions*, South African Foreign Policy and African Drivers Programme. Occasional Paper Series (SAIIA), No 96.
- Alioune, S. 2013. *The Foreign Policy of Senegal since 2000*, Occasional Paper No. 141. South Africa Foreign Policy and Africa Drivers Programmes.
- Aluko, O. 1981. *Essays in Nigerian Foreign Policy*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

African Journal of Stability & Development Vol. 12, No. 1, 2019

- Anyaoku, E. 2012. *Review of Nigerian's Foreign Policy: Issues and Perspectives*. The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Presidential Advisory Council on International Relations and Nigerian Institute of International Affairs.
- Baranay P. 2009. *Modern Economic Diplomacy*. Latvia: Economic Diplomatic Club.
- Barridge S. and James M. 2003. *Theoretical Systems and Political Realities: A Review of System and Process in International Politics*. University of Chicago, USA.
- Chibundu E. 2003. *Face of a Nation: Democracy in Nigeria's Foreign Relations and National Image*. Lagos: Modern Approach.
- Ekedegwa O.L. 2010. Nigeria Foreign Economic Relations under the Obasanjo Administration. *Ilorin journal of History and International Studies* 104118
- Utomi P. 2012. China and Nigeria, retrieved from http://080603_utomi_nigeriachina

Archival Documents

Senegalese Embassy Report (2018)

Online sources

World Bank Data (2018).

Thesis

- Adeyemo, O. 2018. *Nigeria-Senegal Relations: 2013-2018*. Unpublished M.Sc. thesis, Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti.
- Folarin, S. 2010. *National Role Conceptions and Nigeria's African Policy (1985-2007)*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Ota: Covenant University.